Ban on Import of Indian Bidis

1142. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA has banned the import of certain brand of Indian bidis because of the use of child labour in the bidi industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof stating the annual export of Indian bidis to USA and earning in terms of foreign exchange; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir, the US Customs has issued detention orders against import of bidis from a specific Indian exporters namely, M/s Managlore Ganesh Bidi Works on the basis of "reasonable suspicion" that forced child labour is being used by the company in manufacturing bidis.

(b) Details of Export of Bidis to USA are as under:

(Qty. Value)

Year	Quantity in tonnes	Value in Rs. crores
1996-97	76.65	1.794
1997-98	109.52	2.291
1998-1999	137.17	9.113
1999-2000 (April-May)	5.84	0.003

(c) The Government of India has taken up the matter with the appropriate US Government authorities.

Worry of Tea Exporters

†1143. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Indian tea producers are worried with regard to the tea export this year as the foreign buyers, particularly tea producers from Germany and America, have

† Original notice of the question received in Hindi.